

Gazette Project

Interview with

Hugh Patterson,
Little Rock, Arkansas,
16 March 2000

Interviewer: Roy Reed

Roy Reed: This is Hugh Patterson and Roy Reed, continuing our interview from February 18th, and today is March 15th, at his home in Little Rock. Hugh, I mentioned Harry Ashmore. What date did you say he came to the paper?

Hugh Patterson: I believe it was in July of 1947.

RR: All right. Do you remember the first time you met Harry?

HP: Yes, I met him when he arrived on the plane from Charlotte, North Carolina, where he was at the time. And Mr. Heiskell had heard him at a meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors when he was on a panel discussing the subject of the one-man editorial page. Mr. Heiskell had been quite impressed with him and asked him to come down for an interview. I was delighted to learn that he was interested in that because he certainly was in great need of an editorial page direction at that time.

RR: Who was running the editorial page then?

HP: I really don't recall specifically right now, Roy.

RR: What about Charlie Davis?

HP: Charlie Davis's father had been there so long, and then another friend of Mr. Heiskell's had been there a long time on the editorial page also, but Charlie Davis

— Davis was called by his initial letters, C.T., or something like that — but I met them when I first came there, but they had gone by then. I don't know whether Charlie's father had died or not.

RR: Was Sam Dickinson still there?

HP: Sam Dickinson was there.

RR: Would he have been in charge of the page?

HP: I don't think he ever was in charge of the page. And he was difficult. I don't know how Mr. Heiskell ever got on . . . [laughs].

RR: Have you ever speculated on what might have happened if Sam Dickinson had still been working on the editorial page in September of 1957?

HP: [Laughs] Well, of course, he was still alive by then, but, oh, no. Well, of course, he was doomed for any role of significance from the time Ashmore came in.

RR: Had you heard of Ashmore before?

HP: I had heard of him, and Mr. Heiskell had mentioned him, so I had learned a little bit about him. And I had met the man who had become the editor of the *Charlotte News*. I have forgotten right now what connection . . . Of course, at that time, I had not been promoted to assistant business manager, I don't think, and I was still having to try to deal with Will Allsopp, but . . .

RR: Yes, you told me about that situation.

HP: But at the time that Harry came, as I say, I met him at the plane and took him on to the hotel, I suppose, and down to the paper. In the course of conversation with him over the couple of days that he was here, he became aware that I had been

asked to prepare to take over the leading role for the family, and I really doubt that he would've come had it not been for that expectation because we hit it off just from the very first. I liked his attitude; I liked his approach to things. He was eloquent enough, even in conversation, that I was impressed with his creative ability.

RR: So you all became friends right from the start?

HP: Yes. And then we worked together in a discussion of a number of things, and I don't recall when the session occurred between Mr. Heiskell and Allsopp that led to my being given those positions that I had demanded to have — that of assistant business manager and ad director and access to all the records of the company — but I started pressing at that time. When I learned of the rather precarious [position] even the J.N. Heiskell family was in, I knew I had to press further with Mr. Heiskell for giving me a more important role.

RR: Precarious, in what way, now?

HP: Well, of course, even with the new title and the broader responsibility, I was not yet in position to exercise the functions of a corporate officer, and my new title, of course, gave me greater authority in certain areas, but it did not give me just the ability to make decisions that really affected the welfare of the company and, also, didn't let me have any access to the type of information I needed in order to really plan a strategy for the J.N. Heiskell side of the family. Now I could go into that, but that would take a somewhat involved kind of discussion. One of these days, I am going to want to try to do this and lay out the whole pattern of what happened

in this family situation and the strategy I had to follow.

RR: There were numerous owners, as I recall.

HP: Yes. Well, once the Allsopps were out, the only owners were direct descendants of Judge C.W. Heiskell, Mr. Heiskell's father. They were the widow and daughters of his brother, Fred Heiskell, and then the four sisters, two of whom were widowed and two of whom were maiden ladies. The four of them had equal shares, and at the time of Judge Heiskell's death, there were the four sisters and the two sons. And so, what stock he had retained, and he had retained a majority at that point, by far a majority, he had divided between his six children. And so, that way, J.N. Heiskell and Fred Heiskell interests had increased by that amount, but, of course, the others had gained the ownership in their own right for the shares they had. So when I became involved in the actual top management, it was after we had acquired the Allsopp stock, and at that time I discussed with Mr. Heiskell the role I wanted and I said that the time had come, I thought, for the *Gazette* to have someone functioning as publisher who had general, overall responsibility for policy as well as business guidance and that I thought the time had come when I could handle that function.

RR: The paper had not had a publisher?

HP: Never. Never had they — you know, they had sort of followed the line that Scripps-Howard had organized on. They had the business manager running the business side and the editor. And the editor in the Scripps-Howard set up traditionally was sort of in charge, responsible for the composing room. [Laughs]

Just to keep the purity of the line there.

RR: Now, I gather the J.N. Heiskell family owned just one-sixth, then, of the stock after the Allsopps were bought out.

HP: Well, a bit more than that because at the time of the purchase, I think, Mr. J.N. at the time had been at the Associated Press for a few years at that time and he, at the time of the purchase, was sort of the equivalent of the AP bureau chief at Louisville, Kentucky. So he had saved some money that he put into the purchase as had his brother. And his brother Fred was a few months later joining the paper, but I suppose he had gained some . . .

RR: So they started out with a little larger share . . .

HP: So they started out with a little larger . . .

RR: . . . but still nowhere near a majority interest.

HP: Oh, no. Not that much.

RR: I'm sorry. I interrupted you. You were talking about . . .

HP: Well, should I go on and just try to capsule that part of it?

RR: I wish you would because I think this is important to have in the record.

HP: Well, after the purchase of the Allsopp stock . . .

[Phone rings. Interview briefly interrupted]

RR: We were just talking about the ownership of the *Gazette* and your becoming publisher.

HP: Well, at the time the Allsopps — well, after Mr. Heiskell had informed Allsopp and gotten his agreement to give me the different role, I started making some

changes, and Allsopp, I think, might have been fearful of what I might do. At any rate, he had a man named Ed, good God what was — well, at any rate, he had given a lot of authority — Ed Murphy was his name. He was a kind of black Irishman who had had some experience in the media. But he was just a hardliner and, organizationally, things were just a mess. There was no delegation or organization. And so, I think, he was trying to, Allsopp, was trying to get Murphy into a position of being sort of a general manager and all. And once it was apparent to him that I would certainly [?] than that, I think, his offer to sell was kind of a demand that “either you buy me or you put Patterson aside.” And, of course, Mr. Heiskell wasn’t interested in doing that. So when he was approached by Allsopp’s lawyer, the lawyer Burrough . . .

RR: The lawyer Burrough?

HP: Burrough.

RR: Burrough.

HP: He was of the firm of Moor, Burrough and Chowning. Lawrence Burrough, I guess, was his name. At any rate, Allsopp was asking a million dollars for the Allsopp interest, and I guess that amounted to perhaps as much as twenty-five percent at that time. Well, of course, by the time I got there, I’d been able to look at the financial structure and what not, and Allsopp, after the removal of the excess profits taxes that had been put in during World War II, the *Gazette* made the first real profits before inflation and other things set in. And Will had accumulated, oh, something in the neighborhood of half a million dollars that he

had just simply in a non-interest bearing checking account at the Worthen Bank, and they put him on the board of the Worthen Bank and what not. Well, there was that much. Well, of course, the thing was that the war had taken a toll on the mechanics of the operation, and they had not modernized in any fashion by then, and they had neglected certain mechanical functions in the composing room and [?] and that sort of thing, but it was out of date largely. So I knew that that had to be factored in and that if we did the other, we'd have to do it in part with the resources we had on hand and borrowing. I was able then to deal with Jim Penick, who was head of the Worthen Bank at that time. And he said that they could not handle it themselves, that they were not capitalized enough to handle the whole thing themselves, but if we borrowed, say, in the neighborhood of \$400,000 or so from them that he'd have to lay off a part of it somewhere else. He suggested that they lay it off at the bank of a man named Hemingway from Little Rock [who] had gone to St. Louis and was the head of a bank in St. Louis, so he said they could lay off a part of this to the Hemingway bank in St. Louis. So on the basis of that and after my interview with E.K. Gaylord, the Oklahoman that Mr. Heiskell asked me to talk to, I told him I thought we needed to go on and do that and that we could earn our way out of it. And so we did. And that put that in motion. Well, at that time, of course, the *Gazette* was not paying any dividends of any significance because up till that time they had just not made enough money to do much along that line, and, of course, the seven-day competition between the two papers was a great drag and they had not really ever

taken up the competition, you know, vigorously. And I knew that we had to do something about that. Well, at any rate, J.N. Heiskell's brother Fred had died some years before — I had never met him — but the widow and the two daughters were — well, one of them, Josephine, had married John Harrison, the lawyer, and the other one was still unmarried, the younger one was still unmarried.

RR: That must be Fred Harrison's father.

HP: Fred Harrison's father, that's right, John Harrison. John Harrison and Ewing Jackson, who were not eligible for service in World War II, were in my wedding when I was married to Louise, back in March of 1943. At any rate, I had talked to the Fred Heiskell family at one time about maybe having John on the board because I said, "You know, these other people, I don't have anybody on my board who has had any experience" and what not. Well, Deanie made no bones about not wanting to give up any of her prerogatives as director at that time.

RR: Is that Deanie, D-E-A . . .

HP: Josephine.

RR: Okay. They called her Deanie though?

HP: Deanie. D-E-A-N-I-E, I suppose. At any rate, in the course of time, this same Larry Burrough came to us again and said that they were demanding that we pay them the same price per share that we had given the Allsopps. And I said, "Well, of course, you know, when we bought the Allsopp stock, their proportionate ownership increased to the degree that that was eliminated.

RR: The Fred Heiskell family.

HP: Yes.

RR: Oh, look at that.

[Tape stopped briefly]

RR: We were talking about the Fred Heiskell heirs wanting to be bought out.

HP: Yes. They wanted to be compensated and, of course, I had to tell them that we had exhausted some of the resources in the purchase of the Allsopp stock, that they had benefitted proportionately in that acquisition, but they were just asking more than we could afford to pay at that point. So they started looking about elsewhere and the next thing we knew, we were informed that Witt Stephens had agreed to purchase it.

RR: The Fred Heiskell stock?

HP: The Fred Heiskell stock, yes. Well, at that point, I knew what a [?] that was and discussed it with Gaston Williamson, and we decided, well, I suggested that we get Mr. Heiskell to get his sisters to enter into *inter vivos* and voting trusts. *Inter vivos* trust for the maiden sisters who resided together in Memphis and the widowed ones, one who lived in Atlanta and the other in Knoxville, Tennessee, and that the trust designate him as the trustee with the authority to name co-trustee and successor trustee so that when Witt came to the first board meeting, he could be told that his amount, that the remaining amount in the Heiskell family and through the trustees and that sort of thing amounted to, I guess it was at that point around eighty percent because of the distribution of the Allsopp stock. And

I said, "Witt, I don't know why you bought this because it's not going to make any money for you. I don't know what asset you saw in it to justify your doing that." And he said, "Well, Hugh, I saw that you had a considerable inventory of newsprint, and I know that newsprint is demanding a good black market now." And I said, "Well, that's fine, Witt, but that's what we use to print the newspaper, you know, so that's not for sale for a quick profit." And then he said, "You've got more building than you need and you've got real estate and what not." And I said, "That's right and that's all in the plan for expansion as we need it. So I'll be happy to have your suggestion on financial matters and things of that sort, you just won't be involved in any policy decision making and that kind of thing." Well, we rocked along there. So the time passed, and he kept making veiled threats that he could sell the stock one share at a time to other people who would like to buy stock in the *Gazette*. And all kinds of silly stuff. And I said, "Now, Witt, don't go around waving an empty gun at us!" And I don't think he was aware that I was prepared to really [shoot it down on him?]. Well, we played that game for a year. Finally, we had turned the corner again because I was funding various things in anticipation, and, finally, at the time that he said, "Well, you know, I'll take your alternate suggestion," and he was asking for just what he had paid for it, plus about a six-percent interest for the money that he had tied up for the year. So I thought, "Well, here we need to go again to the bank." And Jim Penick was out of town and so was J.V. Satterfield. J.V. was running the First National Bank at that time and had said if we ever needed to borrow money,

rather than lay it off on a St. Louis bank, that he'd like to have some of it. So I had approached — well, I approached both banks, but Jim Penick was out of town as was J.V. They were attending a bankers' meeting someplace. Penick had left stuff with Brick Lile's brother at the Worthen Bank, and J.V. had left with a fellow named Carroll, something like that, at First Commercial Bank. First National Bank it was then. So together they had gotten together and drawn up a list of conditions. There were about twelve roman numeral items on this legal page of conditions that we had to meet. And I started reading through it — Gaston and I went to a meeting with these two men from the banks — and when I started reading down there, I got to about the third one, and I said, "You know, I think, Gaston, this means what I think it means, that they will negate any decision that we might make on policy questions and that sort of thing. So that's out of the question. So let's just recess this meeting and go back to my office for a few minutes." And so we did. And I reached in and got my statement and found that we had accrued enough in that time that, by God, we could just buy them without borrowing a dime! [Laughs] So I went back and said, "Things are off." Well, by God, when Jim Penick and J.V. got back, they were just up in the air because they wanted a loan like that. So, at any rate, we did that and, oh, Allen Gates was able to work with me on getting some funding by laying off some of the funding on insurance firms, and it worked out so that we could budget other things that we needed to modernize the place. And once we got that done, then for the first time, the J.N. Heiskell family had fifty-one percent.

RR: I would like to have been at the board meeting the first time Witt Stephens came and discovered — was that the first he knew about the trust that you'd set up?

HP: Yes, yes.

RR: And how did you keep that quiet, keep it from him?

HP: Well, there was enough time that we were able to go to Memphis and Knoxville and get these agreements.

RR: What had been his intention? What do you think he had in mind as far as the *Gazette* was concerned?

HP: I think he thought he could get a majority.

RR: By just buying first one family member and then another?

HP: Yes, I think so.

RR: And he hadn't . . .

HP: And he could have, probably.

RR: You know, it's not like Witt to have overlooked the possibility that you all had sewn up the . . .

HP: He thought I was a yoke! [Laughs] I suppose that was the best poker hand I ever played.

RR: I heard somewhere that he once said in your presence that you were the only man who had ever bested him in a financial deal.

HP: I don't recall what he may have said, but at any rate, one of his first board meetings, Allen Gates, the company had a term policy on my life because I was a rather important person in this transition — I don't know what they would've

done if anything had happened to me — but Allen Gates proposed that we convert [a good deal of it?] up to ordinary life so it had some asset value, and I don't recall the amount that he was talking about, but at the board meeting attended by Witt Stephens, when that proposition was made, he voted against it. And his reason was he didn't think anybody should be insured for more than he was worth! [Laughs]

RR: What a scamp!

HP: But, you know, before it was over, Witt started inviting me to his Arkla Gas board meetings, and I'd go along with Raymond Rebsamen [?] and he started inviting me to his luncheons and things of that sort.

RR: I think Witt kind of enjoyed the gamesmanship.

HP: Yes. Was it you who told me about Leland DuVall's . . . ?

RR: Yes.

HP: Well, that's funny. [Laughs] Oh, yes, Witt did that. And by then, of course, Raymond had Witt's ear, and Raymond and I had become pretty close because Raymond had, of course, with his CPA background and all that sort of stuff, he had come to realize what I had done in that situation, so he had a good deal of respect for that, I think.

RR: Yes. What date were you named publisher? Do you remember?

HP: It was about November 20th, something like that, of 1948.

RR: You were talking a minute ago about modernizing the equipment and the plant. Did that include buying a new press at some point?

HP: Well, in the course of time, we did buy some new units for the existing press and did some modification on that. And then, of course, we were in very cramped office space. The *Gazette* had gone through some modifications, but originally the press room had been in the basement, sort of parallel to that main hallway off to the right. And only a portion of that area had been floored for the office. The rest of it was still open because the press had been sitting down, you know, it was standing on the bottom level and all. Of course, that had long since been changed because I think they added the press room level back in about 1939 or something like that.

RR: Was that when they put it up at the street so you could look through that big plate-glass on Louisiana Street?

HP: Yes. Yes, something like that. That was before — well, I guess I can remember because I came to Little Rock in 1936 at the age of twenty-one.

RR: Flash forward just a minute to 1957 and the great tumult of the fall of '57 over school desegregation. Was there any concern in the management about whether the press might have been vulnerable there in front of that huge glass window?

HP: Actually, not actually at that time because at that point in the earlier stages of it, we just didn't think it would amount to that much. And I still had my office on the ground floor on the 3rd Street side there, and I was just exposed with the plate glass window right by me. And a few times people would raise the question, "Do you have any fear of this?" And I said, "Oh, no, I don't think so." But then, of course, as time went on, at the height of things when Eisenhower just was wishy-

washy on the whole thing and failed to take definite action and when Faubus, you know, crumbled and all that, then, at the last minute, in the thirty-six to forty-eight hours before the troops arrived, I think there was a tension in the community that could have led to just about anything and damned near did.

RR: Did you all take any steps to secure the building?

HP: No, well, of course, Gene Smith, who was the police chief [assistant chief] at the time, was aware, I am sure, that there was — and then, on their own, they had posted some patrols in the neighborhood where Harry lived and the school superintendent [principal], Jess [Matthews] — what's his name? — lived right over, not — well, the principal of the high school . . .

RR: Powell?

HP: No.

RR: It will come to me.

HP: Jesse something or another. But [?] where Ashmore was. He lived across the street, so they were there. And at the last minute, when the troops were coming in, they did have someone patrolling the area where we lived.

RR: And you were living where at that time?

HP: On North Taylor Street, on what we renamed Ampersand. 2820 North Taylor was the address we used though our house actually faced a street that was called Maryland at the time, but there was still another Maryland, and we had the street name changed.

HP: So were you responsible for naming that street Ampersand?

HP: Well, Mr. Heiskell suggested it because in the type case, you know — well, the streets were lettered up to that. X, Y, Z was the street before us and then came this. And he said, “Well, the next character in the type case after the Z is the ampersand,” so that’s where ampersand came from! [Laughs]

RR: I have wondered for years! That big window in front of the press, after it was all over, I don’t know how many times through the years how easy it would have been for an enraged person to throw at least a brick through there and at worst a small bomb. At the time I don’t remember worrying about it, but looking back on it . . .

HP: Well, of course, up until that last forty-eight hours, I would have felt perfectly safe walking alone in any neighborhood in Little Rock. It was that much different. Certainly, we had no fear from the black community.

RR: No. Could we pause here for just a little break?

HP: Sure.

[Tape stops]

RR: You were made publisher in ‘48, and we’ve talked about some of the capital improvements that you made and you’ve told about overseeing changes in the business management of the paper. Can you think of other major changes during those years that you were involved in?

HP: Well, of course, I had concluded that we had to have a strategy that would bring us into more lively competition with the *Democrat*, and at one time the *Gazette* and the *Democrat* were jointly negotiating their labor contracts with [?]

unions and all, and I had got to the point of recognizing that we needed to do things in the personnel way that would improve our relationships and devote greater loyalty in the organization and all that. And it meant doing some things that you could do in the financing of a corporation that were advantageous by providing employee benefits that were not taxable in the payroll to the individuals. But that we needed to get more profitable to do that. Well, at that time, we had the limited capacity on the press, and I thought we needed to add more units and add [?] so we could print the paper in more sections.

RR: And more what?

HP: In more sections. Sectionalize the paper and organize it better. So I talked to Ashmore about that and at that time we were being solicited as a distributor for *Parade Magazine*. And I thought that if we added the additional press equipment to let us do more sections, we could organize the paper better and that we needed for the Sunday paper to make it a little bulkier and to add more features to it and that we could add a couple of pages of color comics and we could add *Parade Magazine*. And I had figured out the economics of doing that and figured that if we did that, we could raise the Sunday edition price by a nickel, and it was still ten cents at that time. And I figured that we'd have to invest about three cents of that in the equipment, in the [amortization?] of that cost, but that would leave us two cents in the clear. Our circulation Sunday was about 120,000 at that time, so that would give us a little cushion there. And I thought that if we added the editorial content and these other features, that we could build bigger loyalty

among the subscribers, and in order to have the equivalent of that in advertising revenue, we'd have to raise the advertising figure more than I thought we could do right at that time [?], so I was dependent on my theory about the subscriber loyalty that we could do it through circulation [?]. And we did. And by that time, I don't know, I guess, maybe by that time, we had Leon Reed as circulation manager. That would've been — he joined us in 1950, I guess. At least I think Jim Williamson was there by then, so that worked out. Then I don't know where this came in the sequence of things, but in the course of time we thought we could make further improvements and I got a little irritated because when the Sunday papers came out, you know, we still had hawkers on the street at the Marion Hotel and around, and somebody with a quarter could come and get the *Gazette* for fifteen cents and have a dime left for the *Democrat*. And I thought if we could raise our price to twenty cents, they wouldn't have a dime [laughs] left from a quarter. [Laughs] So [?] was to raise the Sunday price to twenty cents.

RR: Must have made sense.

HP: But, you see, in this budgeting thing on the theory that I had developed — I think I told you that we got Jack Olson in from the Internal Revenue Service, and Jack had had some background in cost accounting.

[Phone Interruption]

HP: . . . on the theory and knew that we needed to have a controller who would understand that and who could be responsible for it. And so Olson seemed to be

just the right person. And he turned out to be that. He understood very quickly what the theory was. We had developed a chart of accounts and all that sort of thing and, as I say, the accounting was still out of the green eye shade days and all. So Jack got onto that, and once we knew what the managing point was and all, we had a way of being able to figure what the break-even level was . . .

RR: That's not this machine [in reference to a background beeping sound], is it? That must be something . . .

HP: No, that's just telling us there's a message on the machine.

[Tape Stopped]

RR: You mentioned a while ago that the *Gazette's* circulation was about 110,000 on Sunday. Do you remember what the *Democrat's* was, just for comparison's sake, about that time?

HP: No, I don't.

RR: Well, that's all right.

HP: You know, I wish I had retained some of those charts.

RR: But it was not as large as the *Gazette's*.

HP: No. No, the *Gazette's* was more, but I don't remember how much.

RR: But all this was . . .

HP: Some of this I might be able to put my hands on, but . . .

RR: Making the *Gazette* more competitive was the aim at this point.

HP: Yes, yes. I knew we had to broaden the reader base and so we did several different things, among them, at one time — and when things got to be more

threatening, on several occasions, we went on and made the investment to do even more, like when we took on the *New York Times* news service and when we started the financial tables and all that sort of thing. That could be costly, of course, but I felt there were [?] factors.

RR: Stock tables?

HP: Yes. Stock tables.

RR: You know, I guess I'd assumed that they'd just always been back there in the back of the paper.

HP: We had a limited list, but never the complete list.

RR: Anyway, all these things cost money.

[Phone Interruption]

HP: Well, I'll get off of this in a minute, but I think it was an important factor, as I said, that I first started doing this research to devote the right theory of costs and revenues. It had not been done in the newspaper business. And I became a charter member of the Institute of Newspaper Controllers and Finance Officers and then worked out this theory when I found that no one else had done it and got to where I realized how you could allocate these things. I could not adapt wholly from the background in commercial printing and publishing that I had had, but realizing that you had to average certain things because you are not using all the equipment every day for the production and worked out the allocation for overhead and things like that. Olson took that on and became an advocate of it. And after he had been with us for about a year and a half or two years, I suppose,

Nelson Poynter, whom I'd come to know very well at the *St. Petersburg Times*, found out about Olson and got him to come to the *St. Petersburg Times*. Well, by that time, we had installed the program, and it was working well with Claude Colley, who was successor to him and had been there all along. And Colley was not a creative man, but he was a good administrator. So Olson went on to become the business manager at the *St. Petersburg Times*, and then the *New York Times* learned about him and brought him into New York for a time. He headed a group including Mattson and Holmberg, who ended up marrying Ruth Sulzberger and going to Chattanooga, and Punch, who was out in Los Angeles and tried to figure out how to start a west coast edition. Well, that sort of fell through, but Olson said that he and Mattson then had really begun the budgeting process at the *New York Times*.

RR: That's amazing.

HP: And then after he'd been there for a time, the *Chicago Tribune* brought Olson out there to do the same thing.

RR: It occurs to me that, in a kind of roundabout way, you ended up having an influence on some of the biggest papers in the country!

HP: It was. It was amazing. And then I was made a member, very early in my time, a member of what was called the special standing committee of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association. It was actually the labor committee, and it was our function to deal with the heads of the crafts unions and try to avoid strikes where we could and that sort of thing by sort of getting over and above the

local aspects of these strike threats and things of that sort. So I served on that for twelve years along with some of the top people, and there is where I got to know the heads of all these unions. And I knew them far better than any of our local people did, so that was an added feature. And when the typographical union under Elmer Brown, who had become the president of the union, when they decided on their negotiated pension plan, it was to be a Taft-Hartley plan, requiring an equal number of employer and employee trustees. And I was the first one the typographical union asked to be one of that trusteeship. So Elmer Brown and I started out as the two officers. He was the president and I was secretary-treasurer.

RR: Wow.

HP: And then we added on to where we had three from each side. And I served on that for about twelve years, from the time that funds were starting with about \$50,000 of assets to where when, I went off, it had over a half, well, over \$500 million.

RR: Let me pause here.

[End of Side One, Tape One]

[Beginning of Side Two, Tape One]

RR: Okay. You mentioned labor. Can you tell me about the strike at the *Gazette*?
When was that and what happened?

HP: The strike was in 1949, I guess. Well, among other things, you know, my last position in the service during World War II was as chief of civilian personnel for

the Mobile Air Service Command, where we had 18,000 civilian employees at Mobile and about three or four thousand each at four specialized depots in a four-state area. So I was in charge of personnel administration. It was just like industrial personnel manager for a big factory and a number of sub-installations and what not. And we had been able to reorganize that administration from the point where it had unsatisfactory ratings when I was put in the job to the point where, about a year and a half later, we got the highest rating for personnel management and got recognition from the War Department. And I thought I was going to headquarters in Dayton when they decided to get me to clean up a couple of other messes [laughs], so they sent me to Gadsden, Alabama, first and then to Memphis.

RR: It sounds like some pretty good experience for dealing with labor.

HP: It was. But I had had that background in civilian personnel administration, and I was aware of the inequity of the compensation within the *Gazette*, you know, the fact that the typographical union, the printers, were getting significantly more than the average reporter and all. And so, basing it on the salary administration program we had in the service, under civil service, I thought we could work out a gradation system of where we could be more equitable in our approach to that and, unfortunately, made the mistake of going more public with it, and it was interpreted by some of the people of the newsroom as setting a limit rather than setting a pattern of distribution based on experience and education and those things and what not. So there was little we could do to discourage this notion that

it was a fixed business. That was when this fellow Allen something or another, a nice, bright Jewish fellow, decided that they ought to organize a guild.

RR: Was he a reporter?

HP: Yes, he was a reporter. I don't know, he might have been a desk man. He might have been news editor. I don't remember exactly. At any rate, the first thing we knew, they were calling for recognition, and we went into a series of negotiations. They were making demands for conditions that they had in no guild contract anywhere. They wanted an open-ended ability where they could walk out at any time with no arbitration and no thing like that. And so they were conditions that we just couldn't accept. And it finally brought on the strike.

RR: Were they being advised by people from the national newspaper guild?

HP: No, not real experienced ones. The only representative they ever had was a fellow from an oil . . . he was located in Texas. I've forgotten what his name was now, but I could probably dig it up. But he was brought in and he was representing roughnecks and people in the oil fields and what not, so he was just not competent to do that. So they just, as I say, were making demands that, obviously, we couldn't meet.

RR: So they went on strike.

HP: They went on strike, yes.

RR: What happened then?

HP: Well, they tried to bring out the circulation people at the same time, and they did that committing some illegal moves. Fortunately, the core of our good people

stayed in, and the typographical union who, I think, thought that I had done a pretty fair job with them stayed in. So they didn't respect the picket lines. So then, over a period of time, it just sort of broke down. It was too bad to lose certain of the people who went out, including Bob Douglas and I've forgotten who else might have gone out at that time. At any rate, some of them just didn't want to be involved in it. You know, Carroll McGaughey, who was a grandson of one of Mr. Heiskell's sisters, had come in, and we tried to move Carroll along pretty fast. I think Harry was even considering him as managing editor, and he tried out at that, but he just couldn't keep that many skillets on the stove and all. So, finally, he left and went to work for one of the local TV stations. He was a good TV newsman.

RR: Did he go out on strike himself?

HP: No, he did not.

RR: How many people did go out?

HP: It wasn't a big number because we didn't have too many. I'd say ten or a dozen at the most.

RR: This would've been reporters and . . .

HP: Reporters, yes.

RR: . . . and copy editors?

HP: I don't think any copy editors went out. I think we still had Heinie Lesch on the news desk and, of course, Nelson, I guess, was the news editor at that time. Clyde Dew, did you ever know Clyde Dew?

RR: No, he was gone before I came.

HP: Well, I think Nelson was picked to succeed Clyde Dew as managing editor.

RR: How did the paper — how did you get the newsroom functioning while the strike lasted?

HP: Well, of course, there were enough people that stayed in that it kept working. And then, of course, there were others who applied and were hired. And we didn't have any people who came in voluntarily as strike breakers, and we didn't go out and try to hire people on that basis.

RR: Was the news content very much affected?

HP: I'm not aware of any area in which it was. No, perhaps it was, I just couldn't say. But, of course, you just don't know what you've missed if you've missed it.

RR: To put it another way, do you remember that the *Democrat* was able to beat the *Gazette* in any particular coverage?

HP: I don't know of any.

RR: How long did the strike last?

HP: Well, that sort of wore its way down. It was in for a long time before it ever came up for judgment. And, finally, we were able to get a hearing, and they sent in an administrative judge. I just don't recall now exactly what the nomenclature was for those people.

RR: The N.L.R.B.?

HP: The National Labor Relations Board, yes, a hearing examiner. And he came in and conducted it just like a trial. And by then we had gotten an excellent labor

attorney from a firm where a cousin of mine was a senior partner, the Houston, Texas firm of — well, it was a leading law firm in Houston — my cousin was at the University of Texas law school at the time that Tom Connally was there. Tom was a junior under my cousin, who became the senior head of the firm. Well, I'll be able to find out the name of that firm if it's important. At any rate, this lawyer from their place was excellent, and he had an associate named Lanier, I remember, who was good, and they were up on labor law. And at that time, Little Rock had no really experienced labor attorneys. Well, these were savvy people and what not, and we finally got to the trial and were able to carry. Finally, we got a judgment in our favor. I remember, at one point in the trial, this labor fellow from the union that they brought in from Texas talked about coming in to my office when they had decided to try to get the circulation people to join in and said that they had met with me and they had said that they had gotten representation from the circulation department. And he said Mr. [Patterson?] had banged his fist down and said, "Oh, sh**" and uttered a scatological phrase. And Tom Davis, our lawyer, objected, and the hearing examiner said, "Just say what was said." And he said, "Mr. Patterson banged his fist down and said, 'Oh, shit.'" [Laughs] Well, that got a laugh from the courtroom. But at any rate, we finally got exonerated for any unfair labor practices.

RR: Did several of the people who went out on strike come back?

HP: Oh, yes, including Bob Douglas. Bob had gone I've forgotten where, Carolina or someplace, something like that.

RR: Charlotte, I think, or Asheville.

HP: And then Walt Dantoft. Did you ever know . . . ?

RR: No, Walt was gone before I came. Apparently there were no lasting resentments about this.

HP: Well, apparently not. And, then, you know, I welcomed ol' Bob back. I thought Bob was a bright fellow.

RR: Well, you eventually made him managing editor.

HP: Yes. Well, at that point, Nelson, you know, really needed to retire. And, you know, I was able to make a retirement for Nelson and other longtime people who had been there — retire them at full salary, which remained their pension for life. Nelson was a good one, and we sort of had a bargain that he'd teach Carrick the newspaper business. And, then of course, we had a good composing room foreman, well, the same one who was there when you were there.

RR: Yes, what was his name?

HP: Ernest Dodd.

RR: Ernest Dodd, yes.

HP: And his brother A.T. Dodd, who was our chief machinist back there, just died a couple of weeks ago.

RR: Really? A.T. Dodd.

HP: A.T. Dodd.

RR: Nelson was the one who hired me after I finished with the Air Force. I always had a warm spot in my heart for A.R. Nelson. What did the A stand for? Was it

Arly?

HP: Who?

RR: A.R. Nelson.

HP: A.R. I don't remember, no. I don't think he was too keen about his name, so that's why he stayed with A.R.

RR: He was a man of few words.

HP: Yes, but he had good judgment. And I'll tell you one of the — I think I mentioned this before — in my opinion, Bill Shelton was one of the most valuable people we ever had. You know, it was Bob Douglas who came to me and said, after he'd been back for a while and he was news editor at the time, he said, "Hugh, you know, there are things that we need to do that I think I can do if you'll just give me the opportunity to do it." And at that time, Nelson was considering retirement, so I thought that Douglas, among other things, had the initiative to come to me and talk about that, and also that he, as news editor, had had a broader range of responsibility that included the city editor's function and all the others. So I decided on him, but I knew that I was in a sense passing over Shelton. And Bill came in to see me and all, and I said, "Well, Bill, I'll tell you, you know I've tried to give careful thought to this, and I thought that simply because of the structure that Bob's experience was of a, perhaps, broader range, but the other thing is I know the importance of the function that you've served and that you do serve. And you have more direct responsibility for more of the content of this paper that we originate than anybody else, and you will be

compensated the same as the other job.” So that kept him in harness.

RR: Was he satisfied with that?

HP: Well, I don’t know whether he was happy about it, but he always performed a splendid job.

RR: Wasn’t there a change in title, like day managing editor and night managing editor?

HP: I don’t recall ever having that.

RR: I was gone by then and I got all this secondhand. I wonder if we could . . .

HP: And then the fellow who was assistant city editor and was till the very last — what, Jimmy Jones?

RR: Jerry Jones.

HP: Jerry Jones. You know, a good man, but he apparently never wanted to be much of anything other than he was, and he was excellent at what he did.

RR: Yes. Could we talk for a little while before we quit for the day about Central High? Before we get into that, as background, would you tell me what you can remember and what you know about J.N. Heiskell’s attitude on the race issue and how that came into play during the Central High crisis in ‘57? What had been his position in the past?

HP: It was an issue that I don’t recall our having ever had occasion really to take up editorially. Now, he had always been taught to be a champion for, well, civil rights doesn’t seem to be the appropriate word now, but due process, legality, all that kind of business. Yet it was recognized that his father, having been a colonel

in Longstreet's army, you know, had sort of engendered a feeling of racial superiority or whatever. And, incidentally, Judge Heiskell was the author of a lot of case law in Tennessee legal history and was a highly respected man. I'll never forget the time when the man from the family owning the *Boston Globe*, Taylor . .

RR: Taylor, yes.

HP: . . . came to Little Rock with Dwight Sargent, who at the time was the curator of the Nieman Foundation. Was he there when you were?

RR: No, he came afterwards. Louis Lyons was . . .

HP: Louis Lyons was still there. Well, so he and Dwight came down to call on Mr. Heiskell, and the Heiskells had a little dinner party. And afterwards, Mr. Heiskell took him into his library to show them his collection of Arkansas historical material, but he had his father's commission hanging on his library wall, and Taylor saw that. And Mr. Heiskell said, "Well, I knew your father General Taylor," [laughs], who was, of course, in the Union Army when his father was colonel in Longstreet's army!

RR: Was he speaking literally that he had known Mr. Taylor?

HP: Oh, yes. He had known Taylor's grandfather.

RR: Wonder how he happened to know him?

HP: Well, through newspapers.

RR: Through the newspaper business. After the war, of course, I guess they made up!

HP: Oh, well, of course, the war had been over for a few years by then! Of course,

Mr. Heiskell, I guess, had met Adolph Ochs before he went to New York. And, of course, then after he was editor of the *Gazette*, he would see Ochs every year at the editors' meeting.

RR: Well, of course, he would have, wouldn't he?

HP: Yes, because he came to Little Rock in 1902, and Ochs had gone to New York in 1895 or something like that.

RR: It's hard to believe . . .

HP: [Laughs] These people lived to be a hundred years old, you know!

RR: Oh, yes. Would it be fair to say that Mr. Heiskell, in his attitude toward race, was fairly typical of the old patrician ideal that the races should remain separate?

HP: Yes, I'm sure that was true. Yes. Separate but equal and not conceding that it was not equal and never was and never would be under that theory.

RR: Did you see changes in his attitude on race during your long acquaintance with him?

HP: Well, I had to confront him rather directly, and I'll tell you the case in point. By that time, you know, I had gotten involved in educational issues. Forrest Rozzell had recruited me to take an active part in trying to get aid for public education funds. And he and I had strategized, and I had begun as sort of chairman of an ad hoc state group that was called the Governor's Advisory Committee on Education. And, at that time, you know, it was a cordial relationship that we had with Faubus that had come from the time when Ashmore had been singularly helpful to him, you know, in dealing with the damned communist charges.

RR: Yes.

HP: But I had been, then, made a member of the board. There were sixty of us who were in what was called the National Council for the Public Schools, or something like that. It was the organization that Dr. Conant had inspired to try to lead to a national policy of lending federal aid to public education. And I had been made the chairman of the southeast U.S. group of that body. We met at Lookout Mountain for a regional meeting, and in the course of that, an AP reporter interviewed me and in the discussion of the race issues, I said, “Well, of course, it’s got to be recognized that the Supreme Court decision was the only decision they could have made. We have to recognize that this is a transitional time in terms of public policy and it will, perhaps, take some time for that to be realized, but there’s just no option to this. It’s a fundamental matter.” And so that managed to get printed, sent out on the wire, and managed to get to the *Arkansas Gazette*. And this was a meeting up there over a weekend. When I got back on a Sunday afternoon or something like that, we were with the Ashmores. Harry said, “Hugh, I don’t know whether you have a job!” [Laughs] The old man, apparently, had been pretty — well, this wasn’t on Sunday; it was later on in the week, I suppose, when I got back, but at any rate, the following Sunday, the Heiskells came by, as they usually did on a Sunday afternoon, to see the grandchildren, and in the course of the conversation, Louise there, and her mother and me, the subject came up. And I said, “Well, you know, deep down we’re talking about your grandchildren’s generation. And we feel that we can’t

misrepresent these issues to them. We can't bring them up feeling that what is inevitable is not true." And so that is — And Louise supported that position entirely. That was the last time it was ever discussed. And when Ashmore heard about that, for the first time, he was able to deal more realistically with the question textually in the editorials.

RR: Do you remember Mr. Heiskell's reaction, his stated point of view during that conversation?

HP: Well, I think it was possibly a degree of reluctant acceptance or inevitability. I think he knew, in a sense, that he had outlived his time.

RR: But he had been, I gather, not happy with the way you had been quoted on this issue.

HP: Apparently, he was a little disturbed and thought I was going afield from our editorial policy.

RR: What was the editorial policy on race at that time?

HP: Ashmore and I could discuss it freely between the two of us, but in written editorials, he had felt, I think, strategically among other things, that it was better to stay with law and order and due process and respecting the courts and the decisions. That was it.

RR: Had the paper editorially ever said flat out — now, we're talking about before '57 — had the paper ever just said, "We support segregation"?

HP: I don't think so. I don't recall anything like that ever. And when the decision was made, when the first decision was announced and the court said that the

implementation order would come later, you know, Archie [House] at that time was advising the school board, and at that time, of course, there was a period of a year in which various aspects of this were decided, but the school board took the position that they would comply with the court order and they would come up with a plan of implementation after that order was given. That was at the time that they drew up the plan that was later approved by the Second Court of Appeals, on which the Little Rock plan was based. And that was the one that Virgil Blossom, of course, was talking about in his appearances before the civic clubs and various church groups and that sort of thing. So it was all a hopeful business news wise and editorially that this was a transition that could be made and that this was a process that was, probably, the minimum that could be done within the law.

RR: I see what took place during this period involving you and Harry and Mr. J.N. as kind of a dance. And the old man not really enthusiastic about this, but the two younger men pulling him toward a position. Is that an accurate view?

HP: Well, I guess it is. Now, I never undertook before that Lookout Mountain incident to discuss the question in intellectual terms, but Harry and I had. And Harry would have told you to the very last that my position was always that this was the right thing to do.

RR: To integrate the schools?

HP: Yes. That it was the only course. That you couldn't have equality in any sense without that. And it was not a thing that I feared because I thought that certainly

if the transition could be made in a peaceful way, that it would be a matter of individual selection anyway and that individual selection in any case should be legal.

RR: So many people in our state at that time thought that Harry Ashmore was a communist . . .

HP: Oh, shit, I know. I know.

RR: . . . and that he was out to overturn our system and that kind of thing. If they only knew that there was the same kind of intellectual struggle going on at the *Arkansas Gazette* as there was in the state.

HP: Well, I'll tell you, it was just not in any terms of being a fateful kind of a play out, but I feel personally glad that, to the extent that I had a hand in persuading Ashmore to join the *Gazette* and staying with it, that we were able to do what we did. I don't think we could've done it otherwise.

RR: You mean if Ashmore had not come?

HP: Well, or if we had not had an Ashmore or somebody because I could not have been satisfied with a position other than, basically, the position we took because, regardless of the fact that I had had to discontinue formal education at a time when perhaps I would have developed greater skills in certain ways, I was brought up in a kind of a context family wise that permitted me to develop I think what was a pretty good sense of justice and right and wrong. Now, my father, I think at one time as a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian of the Associate Reformed Church, was very fearful of the Pope of Rome. Well, I know that that perhaps

affected me to the point where I was a little afraid to join a classmate of mine, a girl that I thought a good deal of, you know, to even go to a little Sunday School type meeting at her Episcopal Church in Pine Bluff. I had agreed to go and then on the way, I had got cold feet and I just dropped out because I didn't know how close that was to the Pope of Rome, you know. But, thank God, my older sister and my brother had been able to break away from such remnants of bigotry that might have been in the background, you know. My parents never disliked black people, were always charitable, and I suppose that what I lacked in formal education was compensated for, in part, by exposure I had in other ways in that period, particularly when I was in New York and going to the theater and going to concerts and going to lectures and things of that sort. And later in Washington. I never felt inhibited or any — I certainly didn't have a background in historical knowledge or classic knowledge and that kind of thing and have had to do a lot of filling in of that sort through reading and just other things.

RR: Was Harry pretty well grounded in those areas when he came here?

HP: Well, Harry, of course, had been a Nieman Fellow himself and must have been a pretty good student at Clemson where he'd gone to school, but he was a reader, a voracious reader and was, I think at his time as a Nieman Fellow, he was looking deeply into Southern historical background material and the like. I don't know how far along he was in his fellowship when he was called up for service in World War II, but he had been an ROTC member at Clemson. I don't know right now just when he went in, but I think it was prior to the completion of his year at

Harvard.

RR: I wish I could turn the clock back. I wish I could go back to the fall of 1957 and sit in as a fourth silent person in the room with you and Harry Ashmore and J.N. Heiskell as you discussed what was happening to the state and to our schools and our politics. Can you remember any of those conversations from that time?

HP: Not specifically. Of course, as I say, Harry and I discussed those issues a good deal. Now, as to Mr. Heiskell's participation in it, I was not witness to his discussions with Mr. Heiskell.

RR: Let me ask you [about] a particular day. Harry tells about a meeting, I think, on Sunday afternoon before the schools were to open, when you and he and Mr. Heiskell gathered in Mr. Heiskell's office and the two of you laid out what the situation was and said, "You," Mr. Heiskell, "it's your paper; it's your decision." Do you remember that conversation?

HP: No, I do not. And I don't recall it ever having happened just like that.

RR: Harry told me that — and I gather — he called it up in some specific detail, and he said that the three of you were in his office, looking out over, I guess, Louisiana Street, and you all said, "Well, you know, the time has come and we've got to take a stand and it's going to cost the paper. It's going to be painful." And Harry said, "It's not my decision to make. I know what I think we ought to do, but it's your decision, Mr. Heiskell." And Mr. Heiskell, he said, turned around and looked down the street for a long time and then said, "I am not going to let those people take over my town."

HP: Well, that may well be true. I don't specifically remember that, but in terms of Ashmore saying it was his paper and it was his decision, that was at a time when I was not, myself, saying it was just his paper and his decision. By that — I had, by God, been up to here in fighting for the preservation of the paper, guiding its development, that sort of thing. I knew what it had cost in a lot of ways, and later on, I was to go through the throes of that when Hussman, by subsidizing Dillard and others to the extent of \$12, \$15 million a year, that we couldn't conceivably fight. That it was an unfair damned fight. It was unethical. Everything about it was wrong. And he has misrepresented to a degree some of what actually occurred. But it was in part, by God, my paper, too. And it was not just a decision for J.N. Heiskell because, by then, I was representing not only him but every member [beneficiary?] of his family, but also the dedicated people at the *Arkansas Gazette* who had kept it afloat during that period. I'll tell you, my loyalty was with the staff, and I tried in time to recognize that in the compensation of Ashmore, Williamson, Reed, and others who were the heart and soul of that newspaper. It was not just J.N. Heiskell. You know, I admired him greatly, but I knew that there was no way he could have done it alone or without the help of dedicated people whose opinion might have been somewhat different from his. There was never a conflict that was, that showed any degree of hostility at all in the relationship, that is. Of course, Louise's mother was a wonderful woman and of a broader based attitude, perhaps, to some degree . . .

RR: Than he?

HP: . . . than he. You know, her father was a graduate of the first class in architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and her mother was just a remarkable woman. Grammy Mann, we called her. She still loved to play the piano and think she could do the polka.

RR: You knew her then?

HP: Oh, yes, indeed. One of her daughters, who had married hurriedly in World War I, was divorced and had stayed on with her and was a lovely woman. She had married a Captain Rice out at Camp Pike. And then another sister of Mrs. Heiskell's, her sister Georgia, had married . . .

[Phone Interruption]

HP: You see, I had met Al [Neuharth] when we were together at a Columbia seminar on top management at Columbia back in, I think it was 1962 — '61 or '2 along then. Al at that time was a general manager at a newspaper at Rochester, a Gannett paper. And we became pretty good friends there in the two weeks we were together. That was a jolly interesting group. Young Taylor of Boston was there in that group and several ones who were really in line for top posts in newspapers, and by then I had been publisher of the paper since 1948 and had a lot of experience in management and in this economic theory and all that business. But we'd meet regularly after our day's session and go down to Toot Shor's and drink whiskey and fool around. But when the time came that I knew we had to find somebody with deeper pockets, I had had an approach from a man named Williams from the *Los Angeles Tribune* group, *Los Angeles Times-Mirror*

group rather, and had some tentative exploratory discussions with him and then a couple of others. And at one time somebody representing *The New York Times* had said if we were ever interested, they'd like to talk, but, you know, up until that point, we'd had no thought whatsoever of ever selling the paper. And all of what I was doing over the years was trying to get my boys in position to control the paper, but when it became evident that we had to do something, I started talking about that when I was talking about just the periods of anxiety that I went through. You can't imagine just how intense that was for the last two years before we finally sold the paper. You know, I'd wake up and try to fathom just what we could do and all. But I had, of course, a pretty good opinion of what Otis Chandler had done with the *Los Angeles Times*, and I thought, perhaps, that could be a good kind of outcome or that *The New York Times* was a potential owner or . . . and then when Gannett indicated interest, it was after they had acquired a couple of bigger papers, including the *Courier-Journal*, and Al had said that the *Gazette* would be another jewel in their crown. And I thought it was at a time when Al, really having fooled with all these smaller papers and running them on a kind of a formula basis, was really trying to achieve some distinction in the good paper field and what not. But, of course, about the time our deal went through, he decided to vacate the chairman job and turned it over to John Curley. And that was a disappointment to me. From then on, their judgment in who to send in and how to try to deal with the thing was just flawed in just about every respect. The man they sent in to be publisher had been a circulation manager over in Memphis

at one time, and just had no concept of the editorial strength of the *Gazette*. Then the later ones tried to put it into the local formula edition of *USA Today* and that kind of business and it was just — and I called Al a couple of times and said, “I just don’t know what to think because they are making every mistake you could make. They are offending people. They are offending the intellectual people from the university. I attend these meetings and they come cry on my shoulder and there’s nothing I can do.”

RR: Did you go up to their headquarters at some point?

HP: I went up to their headquarters at one time and thought I was setting up just a private meeting with Curley, but he brought in their man who was nominally in charge of a certain group of larger papers and all. And so I said to John that I really thought their selection of people was really unfortunate because they just did not comprehend what was happening in their own organization. And I think this man is just not the right choice, and you have the opportunity, I think, for some other people, like Joe Stroud, for example, who had indicated an interest and all. And so John said something that suggested that, you know, my view was pretty harsh and I said, “Well, now, look, John. I’ve been around this track for quite a while and don’t take me for a fool.” Boy, he almost hit the ceiling. And I said, “Now, calm down. Settle down. And let me tell you, I am not here as your enemy. I am here as your friend.” And he said, “Well, I’ll tell you, we’re undertaking a survey of opinion and we’ll see how that comes out.” Well, I learned after about six weeks, that their opinion survey had apparently just

revealed exactly what I had been telling them. But, of course, they were so far out in the [?] by then and strategically, even in business terms were doing such silly things.

RR: At what point in their tenure at the *Gazette* did this meeting take place, do you remember? How many years into their ownership?

HP: About two.

RR: So they had time to straighten it out.

HP: Oh, yes. They could have.

RR: Well, that's interesting. Go back to the — you talked to the *L.A. Times*, the *Times-Mirror* people — how interested was the *New York Times* company?

HP: Well, not that interested. They, I think, recognized to a greater degree than some what an undertaking it was, and by that time, the *L.A. Times* had made the decision to go for the *Dallas Times-Herald* and the *Denver Post* and had made a mess of both of those things. And so Williams, who had talked to me from their outfit — I went out and had a session one time with Otis and some of the other top people out there.

[Tape Stopped]

HP: . . . They had their belly full by then of these other things, not knowing exactly what they were getting into and . . .

RR: Do you remember who you dealt with at *The New York Times*? Would it have been Sidney Gruson?

HP: Yes, I think it was Sidney.

RR: How did that go?

HP: It was superficial and ridiculous, and Gruson was more interested in talking about Hot Springs and maybe hopping over there for a day. I didn't care much for Gruson. I didn't think he was a man of much depth.

RR: So that pretty well took care of that company's . . .

HP: Well, and I don't think they were that interested. I think he made some pass at saying, well, maybe they could consider giving us book value for the paper. . . .

[End of Interview - Session 2]